

Woodstock Board of Selectmen Minutes

Thursday, November 16, 2023

7:00 pm

Regular Meeting

Town Hall, Room A

1. **Call to order:** First Selectman Jay Swan called meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
 - a. **Present:** First Selectman Jay Swan, Selectman Chandler Paquette, Selectwoman Kate McDonald
 - b. **Others Present:** Fire Marshal Richard Baron, Ray & Pam Morgan, Charlene Perkins Cutler, Jessica Weaver Boose, Matt McCabe, Su & Sean Connor, Mary Weaver, Glen and Christine Lessig, Megan Bard Morse, Wendy Costa, Christine Lewis, Charlene Perkins Cutler, Dale Froelich, several additional members of the public and Recording Secretary Amy Monahan
2. **Approval of Minutes from November 2, 2023 Board of Selectmen's Meeting**
 - a. Kate McDonald made a ***Motion** to approve the Minutes from November 2, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting as presented. ***Seconded** by Jay Swan. ***Motion Passed Unanimously.**
3. **Public Comment**
 - a. Su Connor, Agent for the Elderly and Committee on Aging Member, noted that the AD HOC recommended that the proposed senior tax freeze go to Town Meeting and shared information on Senior tax relief options. The Senior Tax Freeze would help the most vulnerable in town be able to age in place. She formally requests that the topic be brought to Town meeting.
 - i. Kate McDonald asked when the applications for next year would be accepted. Su Connor noted the State application period for the Circuit Breaker Program opens February 1, 2024 and closes on May 15, 2024.
 - ii. Su Connor noted 77% of CT towns offer this type of proposed tax freeze program including Pomfret.
 - iii. The proposed tax freeze would meet same standards of circuit breaker program. Approximately 85 residents in Woodstock would meet the criteria for the proposed program. The qualified would still pay taxes but those taxes would not increase going forward.
 - iv. Su Connor reviewed the Circuit Breaker Program, a state mandated program for tax reduction and the difference between the reduction program and the freeze option. Criteria is currently for ages 65 and over, having lived in town for at least a year, program for primary residence only and income rate set every year by the State. All participants are required to reapply every 2 years to ensure that they are still eligible for the tax relief.
 - v. Matt McCabe, although not retirement age, sees the value for residents within our community with Senior Tax Programs and understands the struggle and fear that many Senior Residents face. Matt noted that the impact on his finances to make up the difference in tax base of a Senior Tax Program would not change his life and he is willing to make that additional payment.
 - vi. Charlene Perkins Cutler stated that the recent revaluation impacted all of us. The Senior Tax Freeze program would have had profound impact on vulnerable senior residents in that recent revaluation. The very small monetary amount of the Town Budget affected by proposed tax changes would make important and needed impact for those who need it most.
 - vii. Christine Lessig noted the lack of subsidized housing for Woodstock residents and lack of housing options in Northeast CT. This means that there are no places for seniors who cannot afford to stay in their homes to relocate in this area.

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- viii. Karen Ryker stated she would be happy to pick up financial slack for a program like the one proposed. She noted that part of the Prop 46 repeal opposition was made up of people on the edge of loosing their homes. Tax programs like the proposed may have resulted in less opposition to the repeal of Prop 46.
- ix. Glenn Lessig echoed the comments of Karen and Charlene and stated that this need of relief for Seniors has been discussed for many years during budget seasons. He also noted that precedent is set to assist seniors in the Town of Woodstock with senior rates at the transfer station.
- x. Megan Bard Morse thinks that there is a concern for the population that needs to makeup the gap in funding lost to tax programs. She feels that putting the impact on taxpayers into perspective is very important. There should be a clear presentation of what the impact would be on the Woodstock taxpayer with the proposed changes in the tax collection before the topic goes to Town Meeting.
 - 1. Kate McDonald will get numbers to prepare this information.
- xi. Sarah Bridgeman noted that many were in favor of Prop 46 because of the lack of programs like this proposed tax freeze. There is call for programs like this in our community.
- xii. Jay Swan clarified that the group wanted to have a vote at town meeting or just hold town meeting about the topic.
 - 1. Su Connor noted that the tax freeze can be approved at town meeting (Pomfret approved at town meeting approximately 15 years ago) and that would save the town referendum costs.
- xiii. Ray Mogan suggested looking at the inflation rate and how that could impact and be incorporated into the tax freeze in some way. Pam Morgan suggested looking into impact of setting a different age for the program would play out.
- xiv. Hampton, Killingly and Pomfret currently have tax freezes.
- xv. It was suggested that to hold a public forum around the proposed tax freeze before the town meeting to inform the residents about the program.
- xvi. Leanne Lachapelle noted that taxes are on the rise after revaluation. She would like to hear more information about the long-term plan of the Transfer Station. Jay Swan said the that the topic is still being discussed and there are several options. There will be no decision made tonight on that topic.
 - 1. It was suggested that the town hall share more information about the transfer station and its benefits & costs to encourage residents to use the service.
 - 2. Charlene Perkins Cutler note that the transfer station historically has run a deficit and only one third of residents currently use the service.

4. Tax Rebates

- a. None

5. ARPA Update

- a. The Tercentennial Memorial Stone was installed. This project was completed for \$300 less than the budgeted amount of \$3,800.

6. Discussion of Fire Marshal Fees

- a. Richard Baron shared information about the fee structure used for the last 10 years. Due to changes in events and operations in that 20-year period, he proposed some changes in requirements and fees. He reviewed proposed changes with the group that included new uses, verbiage updates and fee increases.

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- b. Richard Baron has created a job description for the Town of Woodstock Fire Marshal to assist in hiring his replacement after retirement. The town appreciates his work in this effort.

7. Open Bids for Penetrating Surface Treatments of Asphalt Pavements

- a. One bid was submitted for this project from Felix A Morino Company, Inc. in the amount of \$13,132.85. This is the company used historically by the Town of Woodstock for these materials.

8. 2024 Transfer Station Updates/Approval

- a. The proposed 2024 Transfer Station pamphlet has been presented to the Board of Selectmen for review.
- b. This Item will be tabled until the next Board of Selectmen Meeting.

9. Boards and Commissions Appointments

- a. Consider the Appointment of Kate McDonald as the Board of Selectmen Representative on the Quasset School Advisory Committee for the term of November 21, 2023 through November 18, 2025
- b. Consider the Appointment of Stuart Peaslee from Alternate to Full Member of the Inlands Wetlands & Watercourses Agency for the Term of November 16, 2023 through December 31, 2025
- c. Consider the Resignation of Diane Converse as a Member of the Beautification Committee
- d. Consider the Resignation of Glenn Converse as a Member of the Beautification Committee
- e. Consider the Resignation of Emilie Hebert as a Member of the Open Space Committee
- f. Consider Reappointments to the following Boards and Commissions for the Term of November 21, 2023 through November 18, 2025
- g. Full slate considerations
 - i. Agent for the Elderly: Su Connor
 - ii. Arboretum Committee: Philippa Paquette, Charlotte Davis, John Davis, Sara Dziedzic, Denise Esslinger
 - iii. Beautification Committee: Crystal Adams, Patricia Papini
 - iv. Charter Communications: Nancy Gale
 - v. Committee on Aging: Melissa Jameson, Kristen Kaiser, Wendy Costa, Kevin Downer, Sue Swan, Suzanne Woodward, Su Connor, Dotti Durst
 - vi. Constable: Stewart Morse (Chief), Seth Spalding, James Bellerose, Roy Bradrick, Dennis Hebert, Jay Swan, Janet Szpyrka
 - vii. Flood & Erosion Control: Jay Swan, Chandler Paquette, Kate McDonald, Lee Wesler, Mark Parker
 - viii. Open Space Land Acquisition: Dawn Adiletta, Crystal Adams, Syd Blodgett, Charlene Cutler, George French, Roger Gale, Amy Monahan, Chandler Paquette, Stewart Morse
 - ix. Quasset School Advisory: Myra Pratte, Mike Blanchflower, Greg Kline, Kyra Litschauer, Irene Wheeler, *BOE Rep Announced Dec/Jan*
 - x. Recreation Commission: Kathy LaBonte, Sarah Bentley, Marie Chamberlin, Amy Monahan, Sue Swan
 - xi. Tree Warden: William Rathbone
 - xii. Veterans Advisory Committee: Glenn Boies, Everett Shepard, Russell Dowd, Todd Smith
- h. Kate McDonald made a ***Motion** to accept and approve all appointments and resignations as presented above. ***Seconded** by Jay Swan. ***The motion passed unanimously.**

10. Approve Calendar Year 2024 BOS Meeting Schedule

- a. This agenda item will be tabled until the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

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11. Set Date for Budget Referendum

- a. This agenda item will be tabled until the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

12. Correspondence and Announcements

- a. The results of the recent election were read for the record. Official results can be found on the Town Website- <https://www.woodstockct.gov/home/news/2023-official-election-results>
- b. The Democratic Boot Drive held on November 4th was very successful. Thank you to all that participated.
- c. November 11th events in Woodstock included the Veterans Day Ceremony, Hazardous Waste Day and the annual WVFA Toy drive. All events were successful and the WVFA raised a record amount of \$8500 and collected over 900 toys.
- d. Woodstock Academy Head of Schools, Chris Sandford, sent letter to congratulate John Navarro on his retirement. Jay Swan read the letter for the record.
- e. N95 masks are available in the lobby of the Town Hall.
- f. Wreaths Across America ceremony will take place on Saturday, December 16, 2023 at noon on the Town Common and several other locations.
- g. Jay Swan and Jason Scranton attended a DOT Region 2 meeting about the proposed light at the intersection of Route 169 by Fairgrounds. The project officially begins November 24, 2023 with construction scheduled to begin on May 9, 2024 and end August of 2025.
- h. Please visit the Recreation Department page for information about upcoming events and programs. Space is still available for the bus trip to New York City Nov.25th and be sure to mark your calendars for the Woodstock Winter Festival on Saturday, December 9, 2023.
<https://www.woodstockct.gov/recreation-department>
- i. There will be an Eagle Scouts Ceremony for 5 scouts receiving the award on Saturday, January 6 at 1 pm. The Board of Selectmen have been invited to attend.
- j. Advertised job postings for the Town of Woodstock include CDL Driver, Part Time Snow Removal, Fire Marshal & Land Grant Position. More information can be found on the Town Websites-
<https://www.woodstockct.gov/services/employment>

13. Public Comments

- a. Those present showed their thanks and appreciation to our Fire Marshal
- b. Jay Swan thanked all for attending.

14. Adjournment

- a. Kate McDonald made a ***Motion** to adjourn. *** Seconded** by Jay Swan. ***The motion passed unanimously**. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Amy Monahan, Recording Secretary. DISCLAIMER: These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Selectmen. Please refer to next month's meeting for approval/amendments.